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REMARKS

In the outstanding Office Action, the following references (1) and (2) are cited.

- (1) JP5-331108 (hereinafter, frequently referred to as "JP '108"); and
- (2) U.S. Patent No. 3,274,214 (hereinafter, frequently referred to as "*Prochaska* '214").

JP '108 is a Japanese language patent document. Therefore, for the Examiner's convenience, the Applicants submit as an Exhibit a full English translation of JP '108, which is a machine translation provided by the Japan Patent Office.

(I) Amendment to the claims

Claims 35-37 have been canceled. Claim 38 has been added. Claims 1-34 and 38 are pending and under consideration.

(II) The state of the art and the essential features and advantages of the present invention

Before specifically addressing the Examiner's rejections of the claims over the references, it is believed that the following background information should be considered in order to shed a proper light on the development of the present invention and the advantageous features thereof.

As described in the present specification under "Prior Art", there are a number of conventional methods for producing an aromatic carbonate; however, these conventional methods have various problems, such as the use of a toxic substance as a raw material; the corrosion of the production equipment due to a chlorine-containing compound; the cumbersome operation for the removal of a by-product (such as a chlorine-containing compound); and the difficulty in the conversion of a co-product to a raw material. Even when carbon dioxide (which has substantially no toxicity and contains no chlorine compound) is used as a carbonyl source, there still are problems, such as the generations of a co-product and a by-product derived from a dehydrating agent used, and the need for regeneration or disposal of a dehydrating agent.

In this situation, the present inventors have made extensive and intensive studies with a view potentially toward solving the above-mentioned problems accompanying the prior art and/or different problems. As a result, it has been found that all of the problems accompanying the prior art can be solved by a method as defined in claim 1 of the present application. For easy reference, claim 1 of the present application is reproduced below:

1. A method for producing an aromatic carbonate, comprising: